Along the Curves of Cities
Transit

When our churn-turning bus guzzles out and unfurls toy rubber doors—spitting newly-birthed children across the church threshold (that knuckle of a bulbous dream)—

That is when I will step back into myself and tell you:
I do not think we are cocooned in the crest between the thumb and index finger of liberty.

At the here end of a what-if, see artery-red conviction flush. You will no longer find that transparent simulacrum of me reflecting pallor of salmon-matchbox edifices lining the psalm yard.

I will tell you about that hairpin turn away from the city this monotony demands me take:
some far-off and bright-eyed barreling
down backroad veins,
plug pulled from the sound system so we can speak errantly about change.
coordinates

somewhere north of east,
i sit in a cinderblock vacuum, the bricks pale as molars. there are wooden splinters tangled like flies in my hair, and chlorine masks the scent of amaryllis. people here like to chip at my love which uncoils from summer until it hits the bottom.

somewhere south of west
you sit in a plaster encasement painted mustard, watching it cave towards an egg. soon moss will grow on you in lichen skeins, replacing saffron hair. your fingers look like towers in the cellophane city that stretches outside your window across expanses my love could never reach.
Aftermath

In the third-floor domicile, we bathe in cheap vodka
and flurried acumen, patchwork knees latticing the
Irishman’s wooden bed frame, laughing hee-ha-hee
as the pretty-girl triumvirate with butter-colored smiles
clinks around plastic champagne glasses with cinched
curves like the city’s,

and I try not to
ruminate on
that other night, my
barbed wire fists and
flippant jellyfish fingers
clawing
flesh&hair,
my mouth a muted
echo chamber for
retrograde rationality—

Now Mary and May are crying into cups holding
glistening dirt, spiting the straw-haired boy and his damn
breadwinner ego while we slapstick heave hoo-hoo-hoo,
heads bouncing round like ruddy baubles, gummy eyeballs
creased over a plastic card game lettered sans serif:
spip-edged like me,

and I don’t want to
celebrate this
wilted year, caustic
charcoal still lodged in
throat by fusillade
demarcations of
me-then&me-now,
so I clamp down on
sawdust breath, simply
watch the rodeo—

and I take the whoops and the bim-bams as they
catapult like birds to the mattress, cobbling organs
into a scaffold of macerated bodies huddled away from
the frigid open window and
the morning it will soon spell
when tomorrow hangovers split foreheads
and they will feel with me that
ineffable longing for
whatever comes
after the aftermath